



Over the last six months of 2016, the Library held sixteen community conversations, attended by over 200 residents of Redwood City and North Fair Oaks. Utilizing the Harwood Institute's community engagement model, the conversations focused on people's aspirations for the kind of community they would like Redwood City to be, with an additional focus on how the Library could help meet those aspirations. Conversations were held at libraries, community centers, service group meetings, school and college campuses, the Veterans Memorial Senior Center, and Peninsula Covenant Church. Attendees ranged in age from middle school students to seniors, represented a spectrum from heavily engaged library volunteers to people who never use libraries; and included residents of neighborhoods throughout Redwood City, including Redwood Shores and North Fair Oaks.



Notes and transcripts from the conversations were analyzed to identify themes that suggested potential courses of action for developing library programs and services that help the community to achieve its aspirations. Three undergraduate students from Stanford assisted Library staff with analysis of the conversations as art of their coursework for Community Based Research As A Tool For Social Action under the guidance of Professor Arnetha F. Ball.

Because of the broad emphasis on community aspirations, community members brought up a number of topics that do not fall into the scope of Library services. These topics are well known to Redwood City's elected and appointed officials, and have also been expressed through Redwood City Conversations and a variety of other public meetings. Traffic and transportation challenges, bicycle and pedestrian safety, neighborhood crime, concerns about the rapid development of Redwood City, and the high cost of housing are community concerns that have been acknowledged and are being addressed by the City of Redwood City. Following are the community aspirations for which the Redwood City Public Library sees opportunities to make direct or indirect contributions to facilitating the development of the community our residents want to see.

*Aspiration 1: Redwood City is welcoming and inclusive, celebrates the diversity of our population, and enjoys a friendly, neighborly community spirit.*

*Aspiration 2: Redwood City provides opportunities for community members of all income levels.*

*Aspiration 3: Residents have more awareness of existing programs and services.*

*Aspiration 4: Redwood City is a safe place for children and families.*

*Aspiration 5: All Redwood City children have access to quality educational opportunities.*

To see more detail about the specific programs and activities aligned with each aspiration, which we hope will help cultivate an even better community in Redwood City, please visit:

<http://www.redwoodcity.org/departments/library/rcpl-info/service-priorities>

Finally, to encapsulate all of the Library's services and the ways in which they are delivered, the Redwood City Library Board adopted a new mission statement for the Library: Redwood City Public Library cultivates community by welcoming all people to experience the shared joys of literacy and learning. This connects with the City of Redwood City's mission to build a great community together, emphasizes the Library's longtime commitment to literacy and learning, and highlights the way we do our work: inclusively for everyone in our community, by going beyond transactions to create experiences, and most importantly to me, by sharing the joy in what we do.